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INFO RUFH LG/AMCONSUL LENINGRAD 0468
BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 00118

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: KREC, UR
SUBJECT: EMBASSY RAISES HARASSMENT OF DIPLOMATS WITH MFA

REFS: A) 84 MOSCOW 16115, B) 84 LENINGRAD 3087,
C) STATE 00534

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. WHILE MEETING WITH MFA USA DEPARTMENT DEPUTY CHIEF MIKOL'CHAK ON JANUARY 2, ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR BROUGHT UP TWO RECENT INCIDENTS OF HARASSMENT AND MISTREATMENT OF EMBASSY DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL. THE FIRST SUCH INCIDENT OCCURRED ON DECEMBER 19, WHEN EMBOFF PETTIT WAS GRABBED BY A PLAINCLOTHESMAN AND FORCIBLY EVICTED FROM A COURTHOUSE (REFTEL A). THE SECOND WAS THE FORCIBLE DETENTION OF ASSISTANT NAVAL ATTACHE LIPSCOMB AND HIS WIFE WHILE VISITING LENINGRAD ON DECEMBER 27 (REFTEL B). ACTING POLCOUNS EMPHASIZED THAT SUCH MANHANDLING AND DETENTION OF U.S. DIPLOMATS VIOLATED THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES ENJOYED BY DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL AND WERE COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE.

3. MIKOL'CHAK TOOK NOTE OF THE FIRST INCIDENT WITHOUT COMMENT. ON THE LIPSCOMB DETENTION, HE SAID THAT THOSE INITIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FPREHENSION WERE SIMPLY CONCERNED WORKERS WHOSE SUSPICION WAS NO DOUBT RAISED BY THE LIPSCOMBS' PROXIMITY TO OBJECTS OF MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE. MIKOL'CHAK WENT ON TO CLAIM THAT THE ASSISTANT NAVAL ATTACHE HAD BEEN SEEN PHOTOGRAPHING FORBIDDEN OBJECTS. ACTING POLCOUNS REJECTED THIS CONTENTION, POINTING OUT THAT LIPSCOMB HAD NOT USED HIS CAMERA AT ALL AT THE LOCATION IN QUESTION. HE WENT ON TO STRESS THAT, EVEN IF THERE HAD BEEN A VIOLATION OF SOVIET PHOTOGRAPHY REGULATIONS, MANHANDLING AND ATTEMPTED SEARCH OF DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL WAS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE. ACTING POLCOUNS SAID THAT IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE PERPETRATORS OF THE DETENTION WERE FULLY AWARE OF THE LIPSCOMBS' IDENTITY AND DIPLOMATIC STATUS. MIKOL'CHAK REPLIED THAT THE CITIZENS WHO DETAINED THE LIPSCOMBS HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING THEIR IDENTITY AND ATTRIBUTED THEIR BEHAVIOR TO EXCESSIVE ZEAL.

KAMMAN

END OF MESSAGE

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